REMARKS

Withdrawal of the final rejection and favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-5 and 7-12 will remain pending.

Each of independent claims 1, 8, 11 and 12 is amended by inserting the subject matter of allowable (objected to) claim 6. Claims 3 and 5, also free of the prior art, have been rewritten in independent form, except that in claim 3, in view of the rejection of claim 4, discussed below, the polar group is not limited to polar hydroxyl group.

Accordingly, all of the pending claims distinguish over the prior art and are in condition for allowance.

The specification on pages 3 and 4 is amended to remove the handwritten underlining. Accordingly, the objection to the specification should be withdrawn.

Claims 1 and 8 retain the recitation of "unfilled." Without agreeing or disagreeing with the position taken by the Examiner, it is now especially clear that the finely divided metal oxide, having a particle size of from 1 to 50 nm, does not include filler. The finely divided particles, having optical characteristics outside the visible range (e.g., > 400 nm) are not fillers.

Although claim 9 was included in the Section 112 rejection it is noted that the recitation of "unfilled" does not appear in claim 9. Therefore, since claim 9 is not rejected over prior art, claim 9 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 3, now written as an independent claim, is further amended in accordance with the disclosure on page 3, lines 20-24. Since claim 3, as amended, encompasses polar groups other than just hydroxy groups, the rejection of claim 4 should be withdrawn.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 7, 8 and 10-12 were finally rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by WO 97/14749.

This rejection is avoided by incorporating into each of the rejected independent claims 1, 8, 11 and 12, the subject matter of claim 6. Therefore, the rejection is avoided.

In view of the foregoing, the claims are now believed to be in form for allowance, and such action is hereby solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Attached is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached Appendix is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made"**.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX: VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph on page 3, beginning at line 8, with the following new paragraph:

--The polymerisable acrylic monomers are alkyl (alk)acrylic acids and esters thereof, including functionalized monomers such as hydroxy, halogen or amine functionalised acrylate or methacrylate monomers. Preferably the monomer(s) comprise one or more alkyl acrylates, alkyl methacrylates or acrylic or methacrylic acid, e.g. methyl, ethyl, hydroxyethyl, cyclohexyl or phenyl esters of acrylic acid or methacrylic acid. One preferred acrylic material [comprises a homopolymer or copolymer of methyl methacrylate comprising 80 – 100%] comprises a homopolymer or copolymer of methyl methacrylate comprising 80 – 100% of methyl methacrylate residues and 0 – 20% of an alkyl acrylate or methacrylate selected from those materials listed above.--

Please replace the paragraph beginning on line 1 of page 4, with the following new paragraph:

--The finely divided oxide compound preferably has an average particle size between 1 and 50 nm, more preferably between 5 and 35 nm. It is present at 0.2 – 5% in the composition, more preferably at 0.5 to 3% by weight. A preferred oxide compound is colloidal silica. The oxide compound is preferably added to [the acrylic monomer or polymer/monomer solution in the form of a dispersion in the linking compound] the acrylic monomer or polymer/monomer solution in the form of a dispersion in the linking compound. Suitable dispersions are available commercially for use as coating compositions to provide abrasion resistant coating. Examples of suitable commercial dispersion include the HIGHLINK™ compounds available from Clariant, e.g, Highlink OG 100-30. The ratio of said linking compound to said finely divided oxide is preferably in the range 1:1 – 5:1 (more preferably 2:1 – 4:1) by weight. The dispersion is preferably present at 0.2 to 10%, more preferably 2 to 8% by weight in the polymerisable composition.--

In the Claims:

Claim 6 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The following claims are amended:

1. (Three times Amended) An uncoated and unfilled acrylic polymer product obtained from an acrylic composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of the residues of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.2 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided compound having a particle size between 1 and 50 nm and comprising at least one oxide selected from silicon, titanium, zirconium and aluminum oxides, and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound.

3. (Twice Amended) [**A**] An uncoated and unfilled acrylic polymer product [**as claimed in claim 2**] obtained from an acrylic composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of the residues of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.2 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided compound comprising at least one oxide selected from silicon, titanium, zirconium and aluminum oxides, and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound, wherein the linking compound comprises a monofunctional or polyfunctional acrylate or methacrylate compound which additionally contains a polar [**hydroxyl**] group.

5. (Three times amended) [**A**] An uncoated and unfilled acrylic polymer product [**as claimed in claim 1**] obtained from an acrylic composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of the residues of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.2 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided oxide compound and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound, wherein the finely divided oxide compound comprises colloidal silica.

8. (Three Amended) An uncoated and unfilled acrylic polymer product obtained from a polymerizable composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.2 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided compound having an average particle size between 1 and 50 nm and comprising at least one oxide selected from silicon, titanium, zirconium and aluminum oxides, and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound.

11. (Twice Amended) Process of manufacturing an uncoated abrasion resistant polymer product comprising polymerizing and shaping an acrylic composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of the residues of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.3 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided compound having an average particle size between 1 and 50 nm and comprising at least one oxide selected from silicon, titanium, zirconium and aluminum oxides, and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound.

12. (Twice Amended) Process of manufacturing an uncoated abrasion resistant polymer product comprising polymerizing and shaping a polymerizable composition comprising at least 70 % w/w of at least one polymerizable acrylic monomer, 0.2 – 5 % w/w of a finely divided compound having an average particle size between 1 and 50 nm and comprising at least one oxide selected from silicon, titanium, zirconium and aluminum oxides, and 0.2-25 % w/w of at least one linking compound which is miscible with said polymerizable acrylic monomer and which is capable of bonding to the surface of the oxide compound.

End of Appendix